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ABSTRACT

This Boys' Town publication for parents presents guidelines for a parental and societal response to purse-snatching, shoplifting, and other kinds of stealing that are a part of violence. The guide maintains that a comprehensive public policy approach is needed, one that is based on an appreciation of the development of learning respect for the rights of others. Stealing is used as an example because it is a matrix crime for interdependent violent behaviors. The guide identifies and details three steps for teaching respect for others: (1) teaching respect for others' rights, including teaching children in advance, monitoring children's behavior, explaining that stealing is a serious offense, and teaching respect for the law; (2) responding to early acts of stealing, recommending that children make an apology, and make restitution; and (3) responding to continued stealing, including making certain friends or situations off-limits and replacing the payoffs of stealing with something equally rewarding. The guide also discusses the role of attachment to family members during adolescence and the importance of churches and synagogues in providing welcoming positive relationships. The guide maintains that diversion programs, such as boot camps, for serious stealing offenses are ineffective. Patterson's process of coercive family interaction and its contribution to violent behavior are presented as a model for design of effective treatments. The guide concludes by noting that a consistent public policy approach is needed, one that breaks the problem of violence into manageable dimensions with clear solutions within each dimension. (Contains six references.) (KB)